



Montgomery County Council

From the Office of Councilmember Nancy Floreen

News Release

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Floreen Introduces Legislation to Minimize Water Runoff from Construction

Councilmember Nancy Floreen and co-sponsors Councilmember Praisner (District 4) and Councilmember Denis (District 1), introduced legislation today, Bill 26-05, to address the problem of water draining onto neighboring properties from new construction or large renovations. "As neighborhood discontent over infill construction increases in the downcounty, the height and size of new or renovated homes is getting a lot of attention," Councilmember Floreen said. "But the impacts from water runoff on adjacent properties can often be a bigger, more costly problem for neighborhoods."

"This is important legislation to address one of the side-effects of new construction," Councilmember Denis added. Problems with drainage are especially acute in smaller-lot neighborhoods. Many homeowners in these communities have been frustrated to find their property damaged by water run-off from new construction nearby. This legislation gives us a tool to address these problems – hopefully before they arise."

"I have heard and seen some real horror stories," Councilmember Floreen said. "Someone builds a pool and two weeks later the neighbor has a lake in the backyard. A new, big house results in water in the basement next door. An extensive renovation channels large amounts of water onto the next property every time it rains. I have talked with many residents and met with County inspectors. The bottom line is that without some changes in the County Code, these problems won't be addressed."

"I was surprised to learn that the County does not require a grading permit, nor do we have a process to review drainage plans for new buildings. This legislation will remedy that gap. Under this bill, to build a new house or add to an existing house, the builder must show how the project will affect the flow of water from any grading or increase in impervious surface. As a result, County permit reviewers will be able to forecast potential trouble on adjacent properties and require the builder to make adjustments before construction starts."

"In addition, any larger new development likely to change the flow of water must include a plan to minimize runoff that would affect neighboring properties. We owe our neighbors this protection."

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